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able to wish that some regular organization might be formed in every church congregation, for such amount of musical study as would enable whomever chose to take and to sustain a part in the Service, and for such amount of authoritative interference as might hinder whomever chose not to befit themselves to sing by taking advantage of this study, from frustrating the exertions of the competent by ignorantly missing the right notes or wilfully singing wrong ones? The appointment of one periodical practice of music that was to be sung on each coming Sunday, together with the appointment of a fully qualified officer to direct such practice, would, I conceive, induce well-minded people to assemble on this occasion, to benefit by the sound instruction that was afforded them, and thus to qualify themselves for their share in the weekly duty. No inducement could be so strong for persons to take part in congregational singing, as the conviction that they were able to bear what they took, to fulfil a part as well as to assume it. No other inducement which has not this in its front can be honest, since to yield to it must involve much insincerity, much hypocrisy, much love of display, all of which are antagonistic to the meek, fervent, pious abandonment of self that should surely lie at the heart of every devotional exercise. Thus, worthily, Christianly to induce your congregations to sing, O curates, vicars, and rectors, and not less than these, O deans and chapters, and more than all other ecclesiastical officials, O bishops, archbishops, and the defender of the faith, her very Majesty of England, you must enable them to sing, and this by means of a due course of technical instruction.

I know and I revere the pains that have been spent upon this matter of general musical instruction by Mr. Hullah, and by those who have followed in his steps or have wrought side by side with him. I know that very much is the good result of these beneficial labours; but I feel that this much is vastly little as compared with what should be brought about, and with what, let me trust, has yet to be accomplished. I cannot think, however, that it is by such persons, as in some places hold the office of choir-master, that the ultimate good is ever to be effected; persons, I am told, who have either received their total musical training in diocesan schools, or who are entirely outside of the musical profession. It was the boast, I have heard, of one such as these, that he purposely played wrong notes in the absence of the organist from choir practice, in order to give independence to his choristers and the power of holding their own in cases of extreme contrapuntal perplexity—an ingenious, but scarcely a plausible apology for his, the choir-master's inability to play the right notes. No, it is not such an official as this who can draw ladies and gentlemen in their hours of tedious leisure, artisans in their moments of recreation, members of professions in their accesses of art enthusiasm and religious fervour to a weekly practice of church music. It must be a person to fill such an appointment, who, by his social standing, by his personal bearing, and above all by his professional mastery of the subject he undertakes to inculcate, can command the respect and ensure the advancement of his collected learners; but, to such a person, my faith in humanity assures me that gentle and simple, grave and gay, earnest and trivial, all classes and all grades would flock with pleasure, as they would depart from him with interest. This

person should rightly be—at least, all rules of reason appear so to indicate—the organist, or else some one in perfect confidence with him, and, in this case, either submitting implicitly to the direction of the other. He might scarcely be a non-professional musician, or, if he were, he must be one of such marked artistic distinction that this would overbalance all considerations of rank and station, and exact respect on the ground of his musicianship alone. Such an institution as is here supposed, could not but be popular in every parish and in every district, in town and country, in crowded localities, and in those sparsely inhabited; its popularity would grow with the good effect it produced, and an approximate perfection would in time replace the half defined whispering, the equivocal intonation, the barbarous bawling of many of our present Church performances.

To this, may it be hoped not quite visionary, proposal can be answered that, in the first days of the Reformation, not to antedate this important epoch in our Church's history, the people sang the Ambrosian Plain Song to which Marbeck, the Windsor organist, adapted the Anglican text, and sang it without receiving any special musical instruction to fit them for so doing. There is no doubt that they so sang; there is no record of their having been so instructed. The absence of evidence is no disproof of a fact.

There may further be answered that, when the refugee Reformers from the persecution of Mary returned from Geneva and Frankfort after Elizabeth's accession, they sang the hymns they had learned in the home of their exile; gathered by hundreds in the Church of Saint Antholin (wherever that may have been) in the City, gathered by thousands to the preachings at Paul's Cross, they sang these hymns with an ardour, and they felt their spirit with a fervour, such as modern times may emulate, but no times can surpass; and they sang these hymns, may be answered, without any special technical preparation. There is plentiful proof that they so sang; there is plentiful ground to surmise that they had no authorized teaching. Surmise is not surety. Would that I, would that any of us could have been there to witness the wondrous effect of the grand incantation of the six thousand Bishop Jewel describes, there assembled in the open face of heaven, outpouring through their many voices the one emotion that stirred their common heart; would that we could have drawn inspiration from this mighty utterance of a genuine feeling! Then would there be no room for words so weak as these to argue the desirability of congregational singing, to exhort the adoption of fit means for its inducement and its enablement; the overpowering influence of the fact would supersede all argument.

(To be continued).

ALL competent persons engaged in the task of criticising the musical performances which are now so rapidly increasing, both in and out of the metropolis, must be constantly struck with the extraordinary efforts displayed by those who really know nothing about the matter, not only to conceal their ignorance, but to do so with such extreme tact as to deceive the majority of their readers into the belief that their knowledge on the subject is exceedingly profound. There can be no doubt that this is an art;

and, like all other arts, it must be duly studied and practised before anything like perfection can be attained; but, to do strict justice to those who follow it as a profession, it must be conceded that the majority of these writers are really critics by accident, and are themselves almost surprised at the position they are now compelled to occupy before the public. Many years ago when it was found necessary to devote a small portion of a journal to musical notices, a gentleman was selected for the office who, having perhaps a smattering of the fine arts, thought that he might say something about music which, having an artistic flavour, would do well enough for a newspaper; and for some time, no doubt, this was, in reality, all that was required. But music has advanced with such giant strides of late years in this country that no public talker on the art can now hide himself in a corner. We remember once at a party that a lady had been maintaining a most animated conversation, chiefly upon culinary matters, during the performance of some instrumental music, but unluckily a sudden and totally unexpected pause occurred upon a *forte* passage, when she announced in a loud voice to the attentive company that she "usually dressed hers with onions." In the present day the snug and unobtrusive critic finds himself in precisely the same situation as this lady: he can no longer deliver platitudes to the few without being heard by the many, and is compelled therefore to remain silent, or speak with tolerable intelligence upon the subject before him. Three courses are therefore left open to him: the first is to study the art he undertakes to criticise; the second is to write so cleverly "round the subject" that his paucity of knowledge shall be concealed by the brilliancy of his language; and the third is to make a bold dash, and use terms of which he does not comprehend the meaning, and deliver opinions upon what he does not understand. In many cases we are bound to say that the first course has been conscientiously pursued; but the criticisms of those who have adopted the second and third methods so constantly come before us in our editorial capacity that we are often compelled to translate them into something like musical language before we give them a place in our "Brief Summary." But these effusions are by no means confined to the country newspapers; for, with all due deference to those who occupy the foremost rank as musical critics on our London press, we constantly see that not only some who shiver on the banks of the art, but many who boldly plunge in, at the risk of their reputations, are still to be found even on our metropolitan journals. To give, at random, a few instances, we recollect reading in a London paper that a composition was in the "key of E sharp"; that another was in the "key of F flat"; that a lady who sang at a concert had a really fine "bass voice"; and only a short time ago, in a notice of one of Mr. Henry Leslie's concerts, Mr. Joseph Barnby, the well-known composer, was actually claimed as one of the "old masters." Such temerity as this is, however, happily rare; and, as we have already said, the majority of those who know nothing about music usually seek safety in writing as much as they can about a composer, and as little as they can about a composition. Then, again, it is always good policy to speak of the brilliant appearance of the audience; and to praise, in the most high-flown language, the artistic qualities of those already stamped as public favourites. A few real extracts will show how some

of the principles we have mentioned are carried out in country criticisms:—

The long expected pleasure of beholding four of the brightest stars of which the musical world can boast was truly realised on Tuesday evening, notwithstanding the very inclement state of the weather, the large Music Hall being well filled with the *élite* of society; and looking from whatever point of view, we must confess that the beauties of the fairer sex never looked more beautiful and charming than on this occasion.

The next betrays a modesty which it would be well to imitate more extensively:—

We will now give an outline of the evening's entertainment, reserving all those innate feelings of commendation and marks of enthusiasm to those who are much better able to discriminate the line of demarcation to be drawn between what is beautiful and what is sublime.

In the following paragraph our critic gets slightly out of his depth:—

Of course the great luminary of the evening, Madame Rudersdorff, was greeted, as she ever is, in a most enthusiastic manner; and when the immense applause had subsided, her entrancing voice gave forth in sweetest harmony the canzonet by Haydn, entitled "She never told her love"; and we must confess that had this been the only piece executed, there was in it enough of beautiful development and pathetic feeling to have satisfied the most ardent admirer of Haydn's compositions.

How Madame Rudersdorff could manage to make herself heard in the following song it is difficult to conceive. The italics are ours:—

The new song, "I pray you tell me why," composed expressly for Madame Rudersdorff by Beigrani, she sang at the latter part of the concert, *amid enraptured applause*.

Really good artists appear to have been engaged at this concert; and for next year we read, "It was stated, *on dit*, that arrangements are pending with the modern Jenny Lind, or the warbling nightingale, Madlle. Patti, to make her first appearance," so that it will be seen that we rather dissent from the manner, than the matter, of the laudatory notice from which we have extracted.

As an instance of the bold, reckless style in which a critic may be said to take at once a musical "header," the following will suffice. The italics again are our own:—

After a scena had been sung, and repeated as an encore, by Mr. Payne, entitled "My Boyhood's Home," came the great feature of the evening, "Ave Maria," arranged for voice, violin, pianoforte, and harmonium, by Gounod, *from a religious melody by Sebastian Bach*.

The double mistake contained in this paragraph will be sufficiently obvious to all our musical readers; but for the benefit of those who do not know the composition, we may say that the melody is not by Bach but by Gounod; and that it is founded upon a Prelude of Bach's, which is not religious at all, but forms No. 1 of the forty-eight "Preludes and Fugues" which, if not at the fingers' ends, should at least be in the mind, of all who write, or even think deeply upon, the art.

It will be unnecessary to multiply extracts, as we have sufficiently illustrated our subject to verify the truth of our opening remarks.

Were critics selected solely on account of their knowledge of music, and their power to write upon it, much good would accrue to the art, and no harm would be done to many who now hold that position. It is well known that several persons now occupy this post because, being fond of music, they are thus enabled to gain admissions to concerts and operas: others because, being able writers upon literature and the fine arts, it is considered, as we have already remarked, that they can speak about music with sufficient intelligence to pass in a journal not expressly devoted to the art. From both these views of the matter we utterly dissent. Be he professor or amateur; and be his opinions what they may, a

musical critic should be a musician; and we hope to see the day when even in a country newspaper it shall be thought necessary to employ a writer upon the art whose knowledge of the subject shall entitle his articles, if not to public admiration, at least to public respect.

CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE Concerts at this establishment continue to be conducted with, if possible, increased vigour and enterprise. Madame Schumann's pianoforte performance has been a great feature during the month, the public, with one voice, agreeing with our high estimate of her powers, in spite of a certain division of opinion in the camp of critics. Herr Joachim has also been delighting the Sydenham audience in some of his best music; and the orchestral works are as well selected and as carefully executed as ever. On the 13th ult., a series of Wednesday Concerts was inaugurated, for the performance (according to the advertisement) of instrumental music, not generally included in the Saturday Concerts, and for the *débuts* of young artists. This is a very excellent idea; and we have no doubt that it will be most ably carried out.

PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY.

THE fifty-fifth season of this Society commenced on the 11th ult., with a very excellent concert, the interest of which was enhanced by the appearance of a new conductor, in the place of Professor Bennett, who resigned, as our readers are aware, at the conclusion of the last season. Without entering into the question as to how Mr. Cusins gained his election to the vacant conductorship, believing, as we do, that it is the critic's duty simply to judge of his fitness for the office, we are bound to say that we have rarely heard the band go with greater accuracy, and that the *tempi* throughout two trying symphonies, Mendelssohn's No. 1, in C minor, and Beethoven's No. 7, in A, were not only clearly indicated, but rigidly adhered to. A certain coarseness, perceptible to all listeners, however, could not, of course, escape the conductor's ears, and it is in the remedying of this radical defect that the new director's real power will be shown; for it is no part of the duty of an artist who accepts so responsible a post, to endure what he may find it difficult to cure. Besides the symphonies we have mentioned, Professor Bennett's charming Overture "The Naiads," and Cherubini's "Les Abencérages," were performed; and Herr Joachim played Spohr's ninth violin concerto, with a refinement and intellectual appreciation of every phrase of this remarkable composition, which almost made his hearers forgetful of its extreme difficulty. The vocalists were Miss Louisa Pyne and Mr. W. H. Cummings; but the music chosen, or which they had, perhaps, chosen for themselves, was by no means effective. Hummel's romance, "L'Ombrosa notte vien," was delicately sung by Miss Pyne, and Mr. Cummings gave as much effect as he could to Mozart's "Costanza," from *Il Serraglio*; but the duet from Gounod's *Reine de Saba*, afforded so weak an example of the composer's powers, that even his ardent admirers, who seem bound to supply a reason for his failures, must admit that the less such works are performed the better will it be for M. Gounod's fame.

MUSICAL SOCIETY.

THE First Concert of this Society for the present season took place on the 20th ult., when a programme of unusual interest was provided. Mendelssohn's *First Walpurgis-Nacht* has been unaccountably neglected by those musical societies which should have been foremost in proving to an English audience how replete it is with those dramatic and highly-coloured pictures of a past age, for the treatment of which Mendelssohn stands almost unrivalled. If in *Athalie* and *Antigone* we feel the real spirit of what we are taught to believe was the essence of Greek music, so in the *Walpurgis-Nacht* we live again in the time of the Druids; and almost sympathize with their terror at the approach of their Christian persecutors to disturb the celebration of their religious rites. In the whole of descriptive music we know nothing more truthful than the wild overture which precedes the vocal portion of this fanciful work; and the choruses are amongst the most vivid and truly dramatic bequeathed to us even by Mendelssohn. The execution of this work was in many respects open to objection. A grave error was in the first place committed by the engagement of Mr. Leigh Wilson to sustain the whole of the tenor music; for, however this vocalist may create effect in the warbling of simple ballads, the truth must be told that he is utterly incompetent to interpret music of such a high class of writing as that contained in the *Walpurgis-Nacht*. Then the chorus was by no means equal to the task; for not only was the intonation often false, but the points of attack were frequently uncertain. Miss Julia Elton and Mr. Lewis Thomas were, however, efficient in all the important music which fell to their share; and the orchestra went as well as we could expect, considering the very small amount of rehearsal which had been bestowed upon the work. Unfortunately, however, this want of due preparation for the performance of the greatest compositions is the rule, and not the exception, in England; and our remarks, therefore, must apply rather to the system than to any special instance of it. The "Choral Fantasia" of Beethoven went very much better, Madame Schumann playing the pianoforte part with a grace and finish which left nothing to be desired. Madame Schumann also performed Mozart's Pianoforte

Concerto in D minor in a manner which charmed all the admirers of true and legitimate playing; the slow movement especially being sung upon the instrument in a manner too rarely heard even in our concert-rooms. A small chorus, with orchestral accompaniments, by Schumann, called "Gipsy Life," pleased the audience by its quaint subject so much as to elicit an encore; but it is a weak—and we presume an early—work of its composer, and was, we think, scarcely worth resuscitating. Haydn's charmingly fresh Symphony in E flat, letter T, was well performed by the orchestra, and Wallace's overture to *Maritana* was selected to play the audience out. Mr. Alfred Mellon conducted the band with his usual intelligence and ability.

MR. HENRY LESLIE'S CHOIR.

THE second Subscription Concert of the season which took place on the 28th February, contained some specimens of delicate part-music which displayed the choir to the utmost advantage. A well-written and effective madrigal, by the concert-giver, "Charm me asleep," two part songs by Mr. Joseph Barnby (flowing and simple in construction, like all that composer's works), and a part song, "Now lie on love," by Mr. G. A. Macfarren (written with the skill of a practised musician), were the novelties of the concert. Mendelssohn's psalm for a double choir, "Why rage fiercely the heathen," was excellently sung, in spite of its excessive difficulty. The encores were Henry Smart's "Shepherd's Farewell," Samuel Reay's "Dawn of Day," Fleming's "Integer Vita," and Benedict's "Hunting Song." A highly creditable performance of Mendelssohn's "Variations Sérieuses," by Miss Madeline Schiller, was the instrumental feature of the evening; and Miss Edith Wynne, as the only solo vocalist, received well-merited applause in all her songs, especially in Haydn's canzonet, "My Mother bids me bind my hair," which was most enthusiastically encored. Mendelssohn's music to "Antigone" was repeated with increased effect on the 13th ult. The programme on this occasion, instead of being devoted exclusively to the works of Mendelssohn, was selected from various authors; and, in consequence of severe indisposition, Mr. Wallworth replaced Miss Kate Saville as reader.

GENOA.

THE promised repetition of Mozart's 12th *Mass* by Maestro Lavagnino, took place in the Oratorio dei Filippini, a spot peculiarly fitted, by its harmonious proportions and beauty of ornamentation, for the purpose. Signora Paulina Veneri sang the principal soprano part, while the treble and alto chorus was supplied by the lady members of Signora Beati's Philharmonic class. The series of six Classical Concerts given by Professor Lavagnino at Villa Novello, has been followed by a second series of six more; giving unequivocal proof of the success which has attended this spirited attempt to introduce a taste for good music in a city which has hitherto been reproached with caring for none other than the reverse of sterling compositions. It has given rise to a similar experiment in the same laudable direction, for Professor Bossoia has announced his intention of giving a series of concerts for the production of Symphonies and overtures by Beethoven, Mendelssohn, &c., at the Paganini Theatre, in Genoa.

It is mentioned in the Italian papers, that at Arezzo, the birth-place of Guido Monaco (known to the world as Guido Aretinus, or Guido d'Arezzo, the inventor of the system of musical notation; for further particulars of whom, see page 155, "*Hawkins' History of Music*," Novello's Edition, 1853), it is in contemplation to construct a spacious street and piazza, which is to bear the name of the illustrious inventor. The street is to lead from the Railway Station to the piazza, which is to contain a monumental sculpture, in honour of the renowned Guido. Towards the defrayment of the expenses of this construction, contributions will be received from all parts of the civilised world.

SCHUBERT SOCIETY.—The First Concert of the season was given at the Beethoven Rooms on the 14th ult., before a crowded audience. The works of Spohr occupied the whole of the first part; and the second part was miscellaneous. The principal works performed were Spohr's Trio, Op. 124, most artistically rendered by Madlle. Rosetta Alexandre (Pianist to the King of Prussia), Monsieur Vivien (violin), and Herr Schubert (violinello); two pianoforte pieces played by Madlle. Kinkel (one by Schubert, in which she was encored) and Benedict's Pianoforte Fantasia, "The Prince of Wales." The vocalists were Madame Sauerbreay, Miss Marie Stocken, Miss Adelaide Bliss, Miss Barry Eldon, and Miss Mina Poole, the last-named lady being extremely successful in Lachner's "Oh happy is the little bird," with violoncello *obligato* by Herr Schubert. If this concert be a proof of the manner in which Herr Schubert intends to proceed in his enterprise, he is fairly entitled to the good wishes of all who desire the promotion of a healthy taste for music in this country.

THE MUSTEL ORGAN.—On Saturday the 16th ult., an instrument under the above name was exhibited by M. Lemmens, who performed upon it a selection of music admirably adapted to display its extraordinary capabilities. The harmonium is one of the very best specimens of French manufacture; and the newly invented mechanical contrivance, called "Dawes's patent melody attachment," has a singularly beautiful effect, the melody being kept, as clearly defined and as separate from the accompaniment, as if it were played by another instrument. One of the great advantages, too, of the Mustel Organ is that the most rapid pianoforte passages